

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 5, line 5, with the following amended paragraph:

Another solution consists of administering the version number of the chip by coding it by a plurality of wires attached either to ~~the earth~~ ground, or to the mains voltage, so as to create a binary code reflecting the version number of the chip.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 7, line 13, with the following amended paragraph:

Preferably, the second supply source comprises ~~an earth~~ a ground terminal.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 8, line 8, with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 1 accordingly shows a stack of metal layers, respectively Metal0, Metal1, Metal2 and Metal3, which form the interconnecting layers of an integrated circuit. Each of the metal layers Metal0 to Metal3 of the integrated circuit comprises a cell ~~Cell~~ specifically dedicated to determining the version of the metal mask which has aided in manufacturing the corresponding metal layer.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 8, line 15, with the following amended paragraph:

Each cell comprises at least one output. In the example in Figure 1, the cell comprises two output conductor wires S1 and S2 forming an output bus of the cell. Each cell also comprises at least one first voltage source in the form of a supply terminal so as to provide a first level of high voltage Vdd and at least a second source of voltage in the form of ~~an earth~~ a ground terminal so as to provide a second level of low voltage GND. In the example in Figure 1, each cell comprises successively, spread over the whole surface of the cell, a first supply terminal Vdd, ~~an earth~~ a ground terminal GND and a second supply terminal Vdd, with the ~~earth~~ ground terminal placed between the two supply terminals. Inside the cell, the first conductor wire S1 is routed between the first supply terminal and the ~~earth~~ ground terminal, and the second conductor wire S2 is routed between the ~~earth~~ ground terminal and the second supply terminal.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 9, line 4, with the following amended paragraph:

Thus, inside the cell ~~Cell~~, each of the two conductor wires, respectively S1 and S2, is at the same time routed close to the supply terminal Vdd and to the earth ground terminal GND, so as to facilitate the connections and disconnections of the conductor wires S1 and S2 from one terminal to the other. The output signal of the cell results, in effect, from a preset combination of the connections of the conductor wires S1 and S2 to the supply terminal or to ~~the earth~~ ground within each cell.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 10, line 4, with the following amended paragraph:

In the initial state illustrated in Figure 1, each metal layer has a zero version of its corresponding mask. In this configuration the two conductor wires S1 and S2 are connected to ~~the earth~~ ground GND inside each cell of each metal layer Metal0 to Metal3. The two bits forming the output signal of each cell are thus at zero state, signifying that each metal layer has a zero version of its mask.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 10, line 19, with the following amended paragraph:

In this way, for the layers Metal0 to Metal2, the two bits of output of each corresponding cell remain in the zero state, indicating that these layers have a zero version of their mask. The two conductor wires constituting the output bus of each of the cells associated respectively with the layers Metal0 to Metal2 are thus always connected to ~~the earth~~ ground GND.

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 11, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

As for the cell associated with the layer Metal3, its output signal is modified to reflect the change in version of the metal mask corresponding to the layer Metal3. To do this, when the mask Metal3 is changed, inside the cell, a new configuration of the connections of the wires S1 and S2 to the supply terminals and earth ground terminals is selected. Therefore, the conductor wire S1 is disconnected from the earth ground terminal GND to be connected to the supply terminal Vdd, and the connection of the conductor wire S2 to the earth ground terminal GND is not modified. The low-weight bit supplied by S1 passes to the state 1, while the heavy-weight bit supplied by S2 remains in the state 0. This new selection of the connections done inside the cell associated with the layer Metal3 is translated by a new combination of the output bits of the cell, which allows the new version number of the mask corresponding to the layer Metal3 to be coded. The mask is accordingly now in version 1. This version number is available at the output of the cell of the layer Metal3 by means of the output bus of the cell, which provides the binary code 0-1 representative of the version 1 of the mask utilized to manufacture the layer Metal3. Consequently, a possible new defect detected on the layer Metal3 can necessitate using a version 2 of the corresponding mask to correct it. In this case, when the mask is changed, a new binary code representative of the version 2 of the mask will be generated in output of the associated cell, for example the code 1-0. The low-weight bit S1 will then be reconnected to the earth ground and the heavy-weight bit S2 will be disconnected from the earth ground to then be connected to the mains.